



Wisconsin County Forests Association

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Wisconsin County Forests Expand Ruffed Grouse Hunting Opportunities**

*Over 95,000 Acres Targeted for Hunters*

Rhinelander, WI – The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) working with its individual member counties has expanded ruffed grouse hunting opportunities just in time for the September 15 opener of the 2018 ruffed grouse hunting season. WCFA's popular Grouse Management Area promotional program began in 2017 with the identification of 12 areas on county forests found in northern and western Wisconsin. In 2018, this program has expanded to include six additional management areas. New locations have been identified on five county forests (Burnett, Langlade, Oneida, Taylor and Vilas Counties) with a second management area added in Price County. These 18 areas comprise over 95,000 acres of habitat managed to promote ruffed grouse and American woodcock populations and provide fall hunting as well as year-round wildlife viewing opportunities.

The 29 individual county forests in the state collectively make the county forest system the largest public land base in Wisconsin with over 2.4 million acres, yet are often overlooked by grouse hunters, especially those not familiar to the area. Jane Severt, Executive Director of the Wisconsin County Forests

Association (WCFA) states, "We are proud of the forest management work being conducted by our member county forest staffs that include the largest acreage of young forest habitat in the state, approximately 887,000 acres. This young forest habitat provides the critical cover and food resources needed for ruffed grouse and woodcock populations to thrive."

"We appreciate the help and support of the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism working with WCFA to promote these special hunting opportunities. While our member counties routinely handle the difficult job of managing forest habitat, time and funding to inform others of these opportunities has often been limited," Severt added.

Key to this promotional program was the development of a web based interactive map tool that grouse and woodcock hunters can use both in their homes and in the field to plan or conduct hunting excursions.

This tool provides in-depth locations and background information on 18 cooperative ruffed grouse habitat management areas in 17 different Wisconsin County Forests and is housed on the WCFA website at <http://www.wisconsincountyforests.com/grouse> . These areas range in size from 600 to over 25,000 acres providing hunters with their choice of hunting opportunities. Some have more extensive hunter walking trail systems while others are more suited for hunters wanting to get off the beaten tract. Two areas include designated All-Terrain Vehicle Trails systems within their borders providing another means of access to portions of these areas. These sites are located all across northern and western Wisconsin and include much of the state's primary ruffed grouse range. Hunters have the opportunity to travel from area to area or concentrate on one or two management areas in a particular region of the state.

Information provided for each management area includes driving instructions, GPS coordinates for trailheads/parking areas, acreage of units, length of hunter walking trails, nearest towns with food, gas or lodging and local contacts for information about the county forest, chamber of commerce and closest veterinary services. In addition, downloadable maps of the individual grouse management areas are provided for each site. These maps identify the management area boundaries, parking lots, and hunter walking trail systems with many including maps with breakdowns of forest types and aspen age classes that should prove very useful to perspective hunters.

"We encourage grouse and woodcock hunters to utilize the information provided by this promotional program and take the opportunity to enjoy Wisconsin's County Forests this fall," reports Kevin Kleinschmidt, Lincoln County Forest Administrator.

Additional information on the Wisconsin County Forest System and links to specific county forests are available on the WCFA website at <http://www.wisconsincountyforests.com/> . This link includes contact information for each county forest administrator's office whose staff consists of field foresters with a great deal of information about the local county forest they manage.

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*The Wisconsin County Forests Association provides leadership uniting the interests of the world's largest county forest program while ensuring long-term forest health and sustainability. WCFA represents the forestry interests of 29 counties with lands enrolled under Wisconsin's County Forest Law (state statutes §28.10 and §28.11).*

*Information on the Wisconsin County Forests Association can be found at [www.wisconsincountyforests.com](http://www.wisconsincountyforests.com).*

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